

*with Danks
referred*

THE
INAUGURAL LECTURE

SESSION 1863-4,

DELIVERED AT THE

Middlesex Hospital Medical College,

BY

THOMAS WILLIAM NUNN,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND;

SURGEON TO THE MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL,

ETC. ETC.

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LONDON:

M'GOWAN & DANKS, PRINTERS, 16 GREAT WINDMILL STREET,
HAYMARKET.

MDCCCLXIII.

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INAUGURAL LECTURE.

MICHAEL SMITH, ESQUIRE, in the Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

AT no epoch in the history of Medicine have the times been more pregnant with events affecting the interests of the Medical Profession than the present. I feel, therefore, how great is the responsibility of addressing this assembly, which includes not only Students, but Practitioners and others anxious to promote the study of Medical Science. I feel the responsibility greater when I reflect how rapid has been the development of the Medical Profession,—it is not yet fifty years since some degree of real unity, was given to the great mass of Practitioners by legislative enactment—and how surprisingly has organisation pervaded that mass, an organisation which is still continuing, and is converting the Profession into a compact, well-ordered whole; and when I reflect on the day-by-day increasing development of the importance of Medical Science, on the expansion of the sphere of its application, and on the consequent demands for greater labours and fresh energies from all connected with it. Progress is now more than ever essential to the vitality of Medicine, and the maintaining its present rank amongst the Sciences. There is no finality in Science. The more that is known only teaches how much more there is yet to learn; as on ascending a moun-

tain the higher one reaches the more is seen spread out to the gaze, and the objects which at lower levels stood out conspicuous against the horizon are now scarcely distinguishable specks in the mid-distance.

We are met here this evening to inaugurate a Medical Session; the commencement, and the renewal of studies comprised in a complex curriculum, the end and aim of which is to fit the Student to practise the Medical Art.

I shall, therefore, beg permission to let me consider myself on this occasion as charged with the duty of addressing Students only, deeply sensible as I am of the honour conferred by the presence of others.

That the task, then, gentlemen, which you as Students are about to undertake, and that your labours will be of no ordinary character, is, I feel sure, told you by your own instincts. It is testified to by the assemblage among us to-night, I am proud to see, of many former Students of this Hospital, whose presence is as cheering and grateful to us, their former teachers, as it is complimentary and encouraging to yourselves. Your entrance into the ranks and re-muster are thus greeted by those who have fought and won in the fields in which you are about to try your fortune.

Thanks to recent improvement in preliminary education, or to your previous experience here, you all come to your task more or less prepared. Your future studies have been systematised, the order in which you are to pursue them has been laid down, you are spared the perplexity of choosing with which to begin. They are, nevertheless, multifarious, and some of them of very opposite character. You must, notwithstanding, apply your minds diligently to all, recollecting that the various branches of science, however diverse they may at first sight appear, have a cosmical relation with each other. Some studies you will perhaps find quite in accordance with your natural tastes; for others you may entertain an innate dislike. In

the one case a predilection may require restraint, in the other a repugnance may have to be overcome.

You will find yourselves called upon to educate faculties as varied as the subjects of study. You must learn to reason as closely as the mathematician, how otherwise will you be able correctly to argue upon data established. Your eye and ear must be made as quick as the backwoods huntsman's, how otherwise will you profit by microscopy and auscultation. Your touch must rival that of the most cunning handicraftsman, how otherwise will you be able to skillfully perform the critical and delicate operations of surgery.

This is not a fitting opportunity for the elaborate demonstration of the bearings and characteristics of each separate branch of study, but it may be useful if I suggest a classification of the subjects of the curriculum. I propose to classify your studies into the Essential and the Incidental.

The first includes the study of Morbid Phenomena—that is, of Disease, of the nature of Injuries, and of the means put in force to remedy Diseases and Injuries.

The second includes the study of certain branches of science that serve to interpret morbid phenomena, and explain the means of cure or the cause of failure.

Lectures, Books, the Dissecting-rooms, and the Museum, the Wards of the Hospital and the Dead-house, constitute the machinery by which you are to acquire a knowledge of such various branches of study. I will for a few moments detain you with a remark or two on each part of this machinery.

It is doubtless somewhat tedious to sit out an hour's lecture—I will not to-night test your endurance—and fatiguing to attend daily several such lectures, but a regular and diligent attendance is absolutely indispensable, not simply to fulfil the requirements of the Examining Boards, but for your own comfort. Tedious and fatiguing as a regular attendance may be, an occasional and irregular attendance will prove infinitely more so. By the first, every day places work

done behind you, and gradually developes the form and outline of what you seek to grasp, as, after much wearisome labour, every touch of the sculptor's chisel adds life and action to the statue. By the contrary course, each occasional attendance will merely serve to point out to you how much you have lost, and the end of the session will bring with it only the mortifying conviction that all has to be begun afresh.

It is not altogether an unknown thing to find a student who despises lectures, who thinks himself too clever to resort to such a clumsy way of acquiring knowledge, so old-fashioned, and only suited to the times when books were rare. In the end such a student, when he comes to measure his powers against those of others who have diligently and trustingly followed the prescribed method of education, will not improbably all at once find that there is something else to despise, and that his own untested method which was to float him high above the heads of humbler men, has somehow or other let him ignominiously drop.

Beyond doubt lectures are an excellent means of training the student to fix his attention. The habit of active attention is one that is above all things to be cultivated. The practice of taking notes of the heads of lectures will materially aid you in acquiring this habit.

As to Books and reading. You must learn to look on your book, not as an antagonist at bay with you, but as an intimate friend to be taken under your arm. It often happens that people who have but a very slight acquaintance with each other conceive a mutual antipathy, but when by some chance it may be they are more frequently thrown together, remain ever afterwards firm allies, distrust and shyness having given place to sincere friendship. So you will find it with some of the big tomes to which soon you will be introduced. The sigh of despondency, which in spite of yourself will escape when you contemplate the

broad back of some compendium of Medicine or system of Surgery, or so called manual of Chemistry, will give place to the smile of complacency when you have made a thorough acquaintance with its contents, so that automatically any page will turn up to your familiar finger. Then you will find that the Genius of the book is not an enemy mocking you from behind unassailed ramparts, but a trusty companion, always ready in many an hour of need, to help you to come off victorious.

I will offer a hint as to the means of establishing this intimacy.

What will probably be the first step that those of you who are strangers in this vast city will take to learn your way in it? You will of course study the plan of London. You will note the direction of the leading thoroughfares, and the position and bearing of the principal objects. Who would think of making a tour through a country he had never before visited without a careful study of its map?

Most books have at their beginning what is called a table of contents. It is the map of the book. It is the outline of the general subject. Now this table of contents is first to be thoroughly mastered, and then you will be able intelligently to set to work with the book itself. Through its pages, as along the road in a tour, you must travel with a light elastic step; if you only crawl along, you will soon become exhausted, and will miss the exhilarating influence of continually changing scenery, when you reach some land-mark or eminence, stop to look back over the country you have traversed—to fix in your mind's eye its general features, and so plod on with a cheerful heart, until you have come to the last line of the last page. What next? Begin afresh, read all over again and again. On a second or third journey one is often surprised to find how much of interest one had before quite overlooked.

It is a very common inquiry on the part of first-year's

students, as to the time at which they ought to commence dissection. My own opinion is, that the sooner a student makes a beginning the better. Dissection will certainly expedite the acquisition of a knowledge of the bones.

Never attempt fine or minute dissections until you have a good general knowledge of the whole body.

Forgive me if I refer to the fate of a student who commenced his study of the inferior extremity by making a most elaborate dissection of the superficial nerves of the front of the thigh, so perfect that he could not persuade himself to cut them away and proceed with the dissection of more important structures until certain inevitable changes, had spoilt the beauty of his dissection, and had rendered possible only a very imperfect examination of parts beneath. Unfortunately, on the occasion of my friend's presenting himself for examination, the authorities of the College of Surgeons held very decided opinions as to the necessity of candidates for their diploma having a full knowledge of the anatomy of the lower limb, and not simply of the superficial nerves of a part thereof.

But, having acquired a general knowledge of the whole body, then dissect as minutely as possible. Teach your hand to follow as far as your eye can lead it, you will find abundant material even in the fragments discarded by less advanced or less skilful students. Important plexuses and anastomoses may lie hidden like gems in an unyielding matrix, in parts disregarded.

The Museum is too commonly looked upon by students as a place to stroll in on rare occasions. You should understand that it will be most profitable to you, to become thoroughly acquainted with each specimen. The catalogue will, at first, perhaps be a little trial to you, but without the catalogue you cannot do much. In the museum you will find arranged side by side preparations illustrating diseases, all of this or that organ; thus when in the catalogue, you have once found the place of a particular

preparation, your difficulty is at an end, as all allied preparations will be found classed together. I advise you against going into the Museum and casting your eye here and there as people do who dawdle through picture-galleries, just turning in the catalogue to what may happen to attract the attention, a proceeding which, by the way, seems generally to terminate in head-ach and loss of equanimity. But systematically and with a definite purpose go over some one series of preparations; if you will do this, I will promise you that you shall leave the Museum with a lighter step, with a clearer head, and on better terms with yourself than when you entered.

Having thus looked into the Lecture Theatre, the Library, the Dissecting-room, and the Museum, we leave this building and enter the Hospital. Our chief difficulty now begins. I have said that you all come more or less prepared, by preliminary training, to learn from lectures and acquire from books. But in the wards of the Hospital you must learn to observe. You go there to study a new language, the alphabet of which is partly to be seen only, like that of a language which cannot be spoken, partly to be heard only, like that of a language which cannot be written, and partly to be touched only, like the embossed page by which the blind are made to read. The peculiar expression of a patient in a state of collapse, as it is called, cannot be accurately described in words, it must be seen. You cannot see the indications of certain forms of heart disease. You must listen for them as the Indian lays his ear on the ground to detect the advance of his foe or the whereabouts of his prey. You must decide by your touch often whether there be fluid in a natural cavity, or whether inflammatory action has reached the stage of suppuration as it is called when matter has made a cavity for itself—the peculiar heat of the skin in certain forms of fever, or the varieties in the beat of the pulse require to be felt, aye, over and over again, so that you become familiar with them; when this heterogeneous alphabet has been mastered, you must at

first laboriously spell over every letter of every word before you will arrive at the meaning of a sentence, or in other words, before you can completely observe a single case. But the faculty of rapid observation is to be acquired, like any other accomplishment: by practice. Let me offer you, to this end, the following advice—viz. Never enter a ward without your note-book, never leave it without having registered an observation or a fact. Do not be afraid to begin this practice from a misgiving as to what to note; or feel disappointed should your first notes be not so strikingly original as to justify publication. But begin, even if simply you copy out a prescription, and the name of a disease. If you will but begin in this humble way and will continue the practice of note taking during your entire studentship, you will find you have accumulated a store of information on which you may draw in after years. By the habit of noting facts, you will all at once find yourself a Case taker. Now bear in mind that case taking, will be one of the chief occupations of your lives. You cannot attempt to treat a patient without first ascertaining what is the matter with him—that is, taking his case, whether you commit it to writing, or trust to the tablets of your memory, is not the question; you must take his case, and the quicker and more accurately you can do so, *ceteris paribus*, the greater will be your success in practice. There is a peculiarity in this branch of your duties—in Clinical study—that is, study in the wards of the Hospital—namely, that the subjects of your observations are human beings, placed where you find them, not for the purpose of affording you lessons in disease, but by the chances of a hard fate, that has either slowly and surely fitted them to be objects of charity, or has suddenly seized them from the midst of a life of independent and honourable industry, and has transferred them, almost in the twinkling of an eye, from the busy workshop, or the crowded thoroughfare, to the strictly regulated ward, and the companionship of the helpless, the maimed, and perchance the dying.

It is my duty to offer a few words of caution, kindly meant, as to your bearing whilst within the walls of the Hospital, and especially within its Wards. All levity is to be avoided as a crime. We, as Lecturers, do not expect that your daily exodus from this theatre after an hour's constraint, and fixed attention, will be on tip-toe, or, that your steps will be studiously measured; but, in the wards of the Hospital, we are solemnly pledged to prevent whatever may unnecessarily disturb the sick or make a single patient feel other than that his own welfare and cure are the primary considerations.

A thoughtless act will be viewed very differently by one full of health and animal spirits, and by one whose fracture may be made to ache for hours, or who may even be thrown into a convulsion by the simple jarring of his bed. Truly has our poet Laureate said—

“A little thing may harm a wounded man.”

When art and skill have failed, and Disease has claimed its victim, follow the body to the *post-mortem* room. It is there that much of your work here, in the lecture-theatre, and dissecting-room, will realize for you rich rewards. You cannot enter the post-mortem room without profit. Familiarity with diseased structure and morbid appearances will give you confidence under trying circumstances. I allude to such circumstances, in which you are sure to be placed in medico-legal investigations, when it may depend on your dictum, whether suspicion shall be aroused or shall be removed, whether the murderer shall escape, or the innocent be unjustly arraigned. In your every-day conflict with disease, a sound pathological knowledge is absolutely essential; even with it, you may be occasionally, without it, continually at fault.

Such being the nature of your studies, and the means of prosecuting them, it will be well to consider what qualities of mind and body you must bring with you in order to succeed in your purpose. You must not come with a deli-

eately-gloved hand, but with the rough hard fist of determination and perseverance. You must never permit yourselves to be disheartened. I know that the first few weeks of your residence in London will surely try your faith in yourselves, perhaps in this way: the brain can receive and retain a certain number only of impressions; every object in this vast city is almost new to you; the continual and probably insensible reception of new impressions pre-occupies the cerebral ground, so to speak, or, at any rate, tends to render indistinct and confused the impressions of the especial objects of your study. Suppose a photographer were to expect to obtain a fine and distinct picture from any object, if between it and the sensitive plate in his camera a multiplicity of figures were constantly moving to and fro, at different distances from the focus: He would surely be disappointed, some trace of the object might be found on the plate, but not until the restless spirits had been exorcised would he obtain a clear and faithful picture. So you will find it with yourselves, gentlemen; at first, the impressions that you most desire to retain, you will find indistinct and evanescent. I have said thus much, for it is too frequently to be observed that students who have the best intentions, and who begin energetically enough, faint in the race after the few first paces, losing heart at the inability to retain what they read and hear.

Let me persuade you that this treacherousness of memory is but a temporary disorder, and ought not to lead to chronic despondency, and let me tell you that the certain antidote to it, is, a punctual and diligent attendance on lectures. But not, under any circumstances, must you be cast down; remember that with Englishmen to fail implies success, and that to say that an Englishman is down, is but another way of expressing that he is about to rise. And not only bring with you a determination not to be beaten, but the ambition to conquer—not the vaulting ambition that “o’er leaps itself,” but a much more practical quality. Let *Excelsior* be your motto,

but let it mean "I will strive to be better than I am." Let your competitor be *yourself*, secure a daily improvement, however small it may be, do not trust to violent and spasmodic effort; and at the year's end you will certainly find your progress to have been greater than even you had dared to hope for. Daily plodding, persevering work, is like the slow but irresistible lift of the screw compared with the sudden hoist of the lever, every inch gained is safe, there is no fear of a retrogression more rapid than the advance.

I may here mention, in connection with this point, that the subject of prizes has been one of much anxious consideration with the Lecturers of this College. It cannot be denied that prizes excite a spirit of emulation, and thus lead to greater effort than would otherwise be made. On the other hand, it is to be feared that emulation may give rise to other more objectionable feelings on the part of the competitors, and that, while the intellect is being sharpened the *morale* may be deteriorated. But it is again a question whether a student may not reasonably expect that the means should be provided by which he may measure his powers against those of his fellows, and of gratifying the laudable desire to carry home with him tangible proofs of his industry. As a body we have made no endeavour to establish a number of prizes of high money value. Medical students remembering the essence of their mission ought to require no such inducements to throw themselves body and soul into the study of their profession.

But whether you work with yourself or your fellow as competitor, there is one thing especially to be borne in mind—namely, that the preservation of your health is of the first importance, as contributing to your success; in fact, is essential to it. Sufficient sleep and exercise, with proper food, more than perhaps you may be disposed to admit, influence your progress. I make no apology for referring to such matters; often have I witnessed the fatal results of the disregard of them, and besides, a good General looks as

closely to the shoes of his men as he does to their weapons.

There is no real gain in devoting to reading the hours that Nature claims for the restoration of the body. The eye may mechanically follow the print, but the mental impressions are untrustworthy. If you do not think over what you read and see you do not learn. One of our greatest lawyers himself told me that whilst studying for the bar, he read no more than four hours daily (he is now a distinguished judge), but that he "learnt law" on horseback; explaining that while he rode he studied what he had read, one cannot doubt, though, that he studied much longer than he rode.

Without a healthy state of the body the intellectual faculties cannot fully come into play. A student may find that he apparently does not miss one hour's sleep, and then a second, and so on, he perseveres with a minimum allowance of rest, then all at once he breaks down, or sadly disappoints himself at the day of examination, finding that he but wrote a half of what he believed he had at his fingers ends.

It is difficult, perhaps, in London to obtain the full amount of out-door exercise, but cold bathing, and the simplest gymnastics, will, in a great degree, compensate.

Relaxation is necessary, it is the preparation for fresh endeavour; but idleness is not relaxation, a change of occupation is often efficient relaxation. One great advantage of your residence in this metropolis is, that there are the most ample opportunities for mental culture, many of which you can easily avail yourselves of by way of relaxation. Since some of you are destined to pursue your profession in distant countries, where you may be thrown upon your own resources, how much to your gain will it not be to have some general as well as professional knowledge, especially of the natural sciences. The various museums offer facilities for such studies; and when, as practitioners, you happen to be thrown into intimate social relations with those who have had every advantage in the way of education that wealth can give, it

will be hard, if you do not let pass the opportunities of self-culture and refinement, that you need fear comparison by contact.

Assembled here with a common purpose you cannot consider yourselves as a fortuitous concurrence of individuals each at liberty to pursue independently the course that may happen to be most agreeable to himself. It is contrary to the nature of things that men can be associated without mutually influencing each other, and without a moral atmosphere being created about them. The period of studentship is in most cases coincident with that period of life when the reaction of mutual relationship is the most intense. The moral atmosphere in which you will live, will as certainly affect your moral nature as the physical atmosphere affects the bodily frame; therefore, individually and collectively, avoid what is mean and grovelling, strive after what is great and noble, and you shall leave this College with a robust and vigorous moral constitution.

You have, then, to undergo not only a technical training, but a moral and intellectual development. Admitted as students, each of you incurs obligations to his neighbour—one of the most binding is that of aiding him to the utmost of your power in the pursuit of knowledge. If you let the fear of his gaining advantage over you in any competition, by your helping him in a difficulty, interfere with this, then you dwarf the growth of your moral man, and you stain the page that should remain fair. Students should join hand in hand in the acquisition of knowledge, and avoid, as a great evil, a churlish, selfish exclusiveness, unless ambitious of leaving their Alma Mater, without the choicest blessing she has to bestow, good and tried friends—

“Poor is the friendless master of a world.”

Companionship in study is like companionship on a tour. How much more vivid scenes appear when the enjoyment of them is shared by a kindred spirit; how pleasant to incur and repay the little obligations of travel! Now, one may bear a

helping hand, now the other. If the one happen to know something of the country traversed, so much the better for his companion, and none the worse for himself. Besides, may not, in years long after, the remembrance of mutual labour render happy many a passing hour?

Mutual instruction as much as anything tends to raise the general character of a school; a high average of attainment can scarcely be secured by any other means, and therefore in a most important degree influences the success of students as a body at the examinations.

Almost as advantageous, in one sense, as private companionship in study is public antagonism in discussion: facilities for this are afforded by the meetings of the Medical Society of this College. If you will only summon courage to take part in such discussions, you will be surprised to find how indelibly the subject under discussion will remain impressed on your memory; possibly in support of the argument you seek to maintain, fresh ideas will suggest themselves, which would never have come into your mind without the stimulus of debate. Such ideas may even at some future period fructify. It will take some little experience in debate before, perhaps, you will on rising to speak find any other result than that all you intended to say, is clean gone, or that your ideas refuse to be announced in the order in which you intended. Useful as these public discussions are, conversations on the subjects of study, or on the cases in the wards of the hospital, are not to be despised. Students are often afraid of asking of each other for information, from the dread of exposing a lack of knowledge; this is a very false pride—never be ashamed to learn from any one. A late eminent physician used to say that he always kept his ears open to pick up practical hints, especially from older practitioners. I advise you to do the same, so many little matters add materially to the comfort of the sick, that time is not thrown away in listening to the minutest details. The habit of gentleness and tender consideration

towards the poor sufferers who will be under your observation is to be cultivated. Do not suppose that the desire to aid the sick and the maimed is a common instinct. It can hardly be called an instinct at all, it is probably the result of a combination of higher and rarer qualities, or of education and religion. How many passed the helpless wayfarer before the good Samaritan bent over him to pour oil and wine into his wounds. The act of the Samaritan was so exceptional that his deed will remain a bright example as long as the human race shall be what it is. This habit is the more to be cultivated, or the inclination towards it is the more to be cherished since there is the danger that contact with the class from which a considerable proportion of hospital patients is derived, may tend to render you harsh and brusque in your manner. Hospital patients are of course poor, therefore defenceless, occasionally irritating from their filthiness and deceit, from their carelessness and ingratitude. I warn you, gentlemen, that when, as dressers and clinical clerks, you are brought into immediate contact with them, that unless you set a watch over yourselves you may find your bearing grow hard. We must all remember that the poorest hospital patient is entitled to the same gentleness of treatment as the richest private patient.

I have said that the desire to aid the sick and the maimed is not instinctive ; perhaps I may go further, and make the statement a positive one, and say that there appears to be a natural instinct to avoid the surroundings of sickness and suffering. As a general rule, you will find non-professional persons regard a hospital with a feeling akin to horror, and if persuaded to enter its walls can scarcely be induced to look into its well-regulated wards, lest they should be shocked by the very sight of a fellow-being in pain. All honour, then, to those generous supporters of such institutions as this hospital, and to those Governors who give their time and energies to its management.

I assume that the majority of you whom I have now the

pleasure to address, have come here with your studies only to occupy your time during your residence in town. There may be some not so advantageously circumstanced, and to such I would especially offer some words of encouragement. If we turn to the list of our most distinguished prizemen, I could place my finger on the names of more than one who during the entire term of studentship had been daily engaged, for some hours at least with the ordinary duties of an assistant; another proof, if proof were needed, of the proverb, "where there's the will there's the way;" and I could name others who commencing their studies later in life than is usual, have enabled themselves to occupy honourable positions and to rapidly become successful practitioners.

But, such of you as are not so exclusively responsible to yourselves, I would remind of sacred obligations—namely, to those at home by whom your career will be anxiously watched. To the parents to whom your well-being is almost more than life. Do not disappoint them. If you happen to be sons of Medical men, I think you will not do so if you bear in mind by how many toilsome journeys and midnight rides the means by which you are placed in your present position have been earned, and how your economy as students may contribute to the advancement of the other members of your family.

I have hitherto spoken to you as freshmen: It is only right to give the stranger the first place. To those now completing your attendance in this school, and to whom this session will be the last opportunity of devotion to study here, and who have but very few lectures to attend, I would most strongly urge the paramount importance of clinical work; so that the responsibilities of practice may not come upon you unprepared. No detail is too insignificant for you to see into—diligently continue to note everything that may fall under your observation; I have already insisted on the necessity of noting observations, I would excite you to it by emulation with

other professions. The landscape painter, for example, notes in his sketch-book every object that may strike his eye. The portfolios of the late celebrated Turner contained pencil memoranda by the thousand of every possible object. Engineers engaged in scientific surveys will tell you that they commonly spend weeks in making innumerable observations for the purpose of simply adjusting their instruments. The Astronomer, with his eye to the telescope, watches night after night, noting times and distances so small and so great as to be only mathematically conceivable.

One may reasonably assume that by this time you have learnt to observe, now you must endeavour not only to observe but to infer, and as you go along in your observations you must translate to yourself what each symptom observed means, and what are its bearings in respect of other symptoms, so that when all the facts of the case and all the symptoms are carefully considered together, you may arrive at a correct diagnosis. And you must likewise begin to compare one case with another, so as to gain a view of the different classes of diseases. It is in such occupations that your reasoning powers will find fullest employment. The correct classification of diseases may lead to the discovery of the cause. The discovery of the cause leads to prevention : Medicine's greatest triumph. And when you have finished with lectures and have gained your Diplomas, you must not congratulate yourselves that studentship is over ; on the contrary, having satisfied the requirements of Colleges, and Halls, and Universities, but having been, as it were, hitherto tethered by regulations, now you can follow out such specialities as may in your own judgment be most to your advantage. There is one branch of Medicine to which I will venture to take this opportunity of directing your serious attention, which you cannot study in a general hospital—I allude to Psychological Medicine—the study of mental disease. It is almost humiliating to think how this branch of the healing art has been neglected. It cannot in

future prove to be a rare occurrence for you to be called upon to deal with insane patients, when it is taken into account that there are in England and Wales between thirty and forty thousand pauper lunatics, and, perhaps, between six and eight thousand other insane persons.

The chances of cure for such so afflicted in a great measure depends on the obtaining early treatment ; a serious responsibility, therefore, rests on those under whose observation they first fall.*

Do not rest satisfied with what you have been enabled to see in the Hospitals of this country. If in any way possible visit the cities of the continent. Follow the example of those great physicians of the past, who, when travelling could have been no light matter, journeyed in search of medical teaching to Italy, Holland, France, Germany. Florence, Padua, Utrecht, Montpellier, Leyden, may thus claim to have shared in the education of Caius, Sir Thomas Brown, Sydenham, Mead, and Huxham.

* "It is a melancholy fact, that, on a most careful personal examination of each of the 558 cases now in the house, there do not appear more than fifty who, under the most favourable point of view, can be considered curable. This is to be attributed almost entirely to the neglect of proper remedies in the early stages of the disease. To become acquainted with the symptoms first indicating it not only requires much care and attention, but much experience ; for a diseased action of the brain or some part of the nervous system may be gradually undermining the health, and still be scarcely suspected by common observers to exist, from the insidious manner in which it steals upon the constitution at first. . . . Diseased action is allowed to proceed unchecked until diseased organisation has taken place and the patient has become incurable."—*Sir William Ellis*, quoted in Dr. Forbes Winslow's *Treatise on "Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind."*

"Let the physician then estimate, in all its vital importance, the grave necessity for prompt treatment and decisive remedial measures, when satisfied that the enemy is at the gates, and has attacked, or, is on the eve of assaulting the citadel ! Under these circumstances, hesitation, delay, or procrastination in bringing the patient within the range of curative measures, is fraught with the direst results, and with the saddest consequences."—*Dr. Forbes Winslow, op : cit :*

Admitted as practitioners, you at once become sharers in a noble heritage of dignity bequeathed by such men as Harvey, Ratchiffe, Hunter, Baillie, and Jenner. But the estate inherited is not to be squandered and misused; its jewels are not to be scattered broadcast; its mansions despoiled; its gardens let grow into deserts. No! your inheritance is to be handed down to your successors not only unimpaired, but improved. You must strive to cultivate its waste lands, and add yet lofty towers to its time-honoured fabric. In other words, you must endeavour to add dignity to your Profession by the permanence of your usefulness and works. Permanence is an essential of dignity. See how men struggle for an honour that is to be permanent, for a title that is to descend to heirs; so with you, gentlemen, you must endeavour to discover that which shall confer permanent benefit on humanity. And when discovered it shall be given ungrudgingly. It is the open-handed benevolence of the *Ideal Medical Man* that gives a dignity to the humblest practitioner. Millions of money gained by a secret remedy would confer no dignity on the possessor thereof. It is a part of the creed of the Profession that nothing may be kept secret for selfish gain which may be a public good. Where would Jenner's now ever-growing fame have been had he kept his immortal discovery — "The greatest physical good ever given by science to the world"—a secret for pecuniary gain?

"That man is great, and he alone,
Who serves a greatness not his own,
For neither praise nor pelf."

Do not mistake me as advocating an impracticable or Utopian standard. Are we not told on incontrovertible authority that the labourer is worthy of his hire. What I have said in no way militates against this.

It is the sentiment with which an act is performed that determines its character.

The great Father of Medicine, Hippocrates, demanded of his disciples the following oath :

“My sole end shall be to relieve and cure my patients, to render myself worthy of their confidence, and not to expose myself even to the suspicion of having abused this influence.

Into whatever dwelling I may be called, I shall cross its threshold with the sole view of succouring the sick, abstaining from all injurious views and corruption.”

Such sentiments, originating more than two thousand years since have had, without doubt, a most important influence on the status of the Profession ever since.

You see thus, gentlemen, that you have entered upon no light undertaking. To rightly fill your part, you will require to subject yourself to the sternest self-discipline, and to have the most complete self-control.

“To the true physician (says Sir E. Lytton Bulwer, one of the greatest living Anatomists of the Human Heart), there is an inexpressible sanctity in the sick chamber. At its threshold, the more human passions quit their hold on his heart. . . . The grief, even, permitted to others, he must put aside. He must enter that room a Calm Intelligence. He is disabled for his mission if he suffer aught to obscure the keen, quiet glance of his science. Age or youth, beauty or deformity, innocence or guilt, merge their distinctions in one common attribute—human suffering appealing to human skill.”

And on you devolves the duty of contributing to medical knowledge.

I have already said that progress is more than ever essential to the vitality of Medicine, great as its progress has been, and to the maintaining of its present rank amongst the sciences. If one glances at the strides made in other departments of science, and at the diffusion of scientific knowledge, it is obvious that more and more will be demanded of us, and that strenuous efforts will be required to keep pace with the general advance. To take the very lowest view of the case, the profession might be said to be pretty much in the position of a certain

well-known and peaceably-disposed country, its inhabitants described as being a nation of shopkeepers, which we read is, by the increased armies and naval forces of a not very distant but most friendly neighbour, obliged to keep up its battalions, and build its iron-plated "Warriors."

And what vast fields of enterprise and investigation are open to you. How steadily the importance of "State Medicine" is asserting itself. The revelations that have lately been made in sanitary matters, especially in respect of the public services, must all tend to make the Physician an essential member of Administrative Departments. The evidence of Sir Ranald Martin and others on the health of troops, shows that the bullet and the cannon-shot are the least-to-be-thought-of dangers encountered by the soldier, and that even the tenure of our Indian possessions will depend more on the skill of our medical men than on the strategy of our Generals.

I am aware that these labours cannot be undertaken by all of you. Many of you must devote your lives to the not less useful duties of practice, and in treading well-ascertained footsteps. There is, however, let me say, no single function of a Medical Practitioner that is otherwise than honourable. It may truly be said that the Medical Profession

"Knows nothing base, dreads nothing known."

Whether with his own hand the Practitioner carefully graduates the dose of anodyne that is to give ease to the tortured, or to convert the wild ravings of delirium into calm slumber; or whether he stands at the bedside as sentinel, to guard against contingent harm, Woman in her hour of danger, so that she may say, when peril is o'er,

"He turned "my fears to hope, my sorrows unto joys."

or whether, with skilful touch, he lifts the dark curtain of

continual night from before the eye of the cataractous ; he is alike occupied as no man need be ashamed to be.

Some have falsely concluded, since men with ample fortunes do not enter the Medical as they do the Military, Naval, or Legal Professions, that the Medical Profession is less the occupation for a gentleman. I would suggest that the real and true explanation is, that natural instinct and common sense plainly say that the miseries and sufferings of our fellow-creatures involve duties too serious to be made a pastime of. Surely Medicine has a pedigree sufficiently old to satisfy the most punctilious. It can find employment for powers, however great, and present problems such as to make the most self-confident hesitate. Do you love generalization ? there are ample data to be reasoned upon. Are you curious, and seeking to "peep into the birth of things" ? there are details to be worked out. Are you bold ? opportunities will not be wanting to test your nerve. Are you combative ? there stands the old enemy, the Scytheman ; you will find his thrusts difficult enough to parry.

I am very far from undervaluing those worldly advantages and distinctions men so ardently pursue, offered by some callings in life ; but I earnestly hope that, having once entered the Medical Profession, you may never harbour for a moment a thought of distrust of it. It may be that some of you, whom I now address as students, will attain to the highest honours accorded to our Profession ; but all of you, by diligent and honest discharge of your duties, may carry with you into that period of repose—"life's latest prize," which may it please kind Providence to grant to all here—a consciousness of having alleviated human suffering, and of having lightened the ills of life, which to possess "'twere sweeter than to wear what Kings bestow."